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Minutes 09_15_11

AYHSC Minutes - September 15, 2011
5:30pm-7:00pm

I. Welcome: Karen Dillon, Carlene Newell, Christine Connolly, Nina Martorana, Cindy Bouvier, Joe Curro, Kathy Hirsch, Brian Dietz, Diana Weisner, Mary DeCoursey, Rebecca Wolfe, Captain Rich Flynn, Lynn Horgan, John Sheft, Ethel Doyle, Jack Flood, Colleen Leger

Colleen welcomed new and current Coalition members to the first meeting of the year. Colleen requested members participate in a reflection exercise by pairing up with another person and completing a mini questionnaire. Members asked one another questions such as, "What brings you here today" and "How do you think you can contribute to the Coalition". The responses reflected a wide range of professions, interests and community contributions towards healthy youth development.

Next, Colleen provided an overview of the Coalition, its history, funding sources, goals, past accomplishments, and its function as an important community resource in Town. AYHSC business cards were passed around with the Coalition mission (*To engage, inform and empower our community to prevent and reduce substance abuse and other risk behaviors that adversely affect Arlington youth*) on one side, and the Coalition meeting schedule for the upcoming year on the opposite side.

II. Conclusion of Drug Free Communities (DFC) Grant- Year 3

Colleen reminded the group that the Coalition would be entering its 4th year of a 5-year DFC grant. A summary of 3rd year accomplishments was provided.

A Coalition Member Survey will be sent to members via email in the next several days. Colleen asked that members take a moment to complete this confidential and anonymous online survey. The survey will take 5-10 minutes to complete and will be used to make improvements, focus efforts and build capacity.

III. Coalition Updates

Ottoson Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) Update: Cindy Bouvier reported on the results of the YRBS, which was administered on June 8th to 981 Ottoson Middle School (OMS) students. This survey asked questions about health risk behaviors, beliefs and conditions. Cindy B. highlighted some key findings, and Colleen informed the group that the results would be discussed in greater detail at future meetings. Cindy remarked that survey results are quite reliable, and that fluctuations tend not to be too drastic from one year to the next, there are usually some changes worth noting. Overall, the findings show that most youth are engaging in healthy behaviors ex. 93% report never tried tobacco. Findings show that middle school youth report increased feelings of stress, anxiety and thoughts about suicide. Students report increased concerns about weight and the student perception of alcohol use is higher than actual reported use. Cindy commented on "safety" concerns related to helmet use and reports of driving in a car with adults who had been drinking. Members voiced their concerns around the misuse of inhalants and how to address it. John mentioned there is a National Inhalant Awareness week and perhaps the Coalition could be involved in some way. John offered to reach out to his contact regarding this issue. Another coalition member raised concern about youth (and adults) experimenting with auto-erotic asphyxiation, and accidental death that can result from this risky behavior. Questions about this behavior are not included in the survey.

Colleen asked for member feedback regarding how to deliver YRBS results to the OMS community. Suggestions included: provide a summary for the teachers to share with students in homeroom, inform the previous 8th graders who are now in 9th during the advisory group times, and present information to the School Committee. Diana

suggested an OMS poster display that provided information on perceived vs. actual norms pertaining to the YRBS. Jack inquired about how other districts share information, barriers they experienced, and impact.

Diversion Program: Cindy updated the members about the Diversion Program. The Arlington Police Department (APD) and AYHSC Diversion program are collaborating with Concord-based Communities For Restorative Justice (C4RJ) to incorporate the Restorative Justice process into the Diversion Process. Restorative Justice focuses on the needs of victims and offenders, and seeks to repair the harm done to victims and communities through criminal acts. Currently, middle school offenders of public tagging are participating in this program, as part of their Diversion contracts. One of the projects that came out of the Restorative Justice circle, (contract), is a presentation written by one of the students to be delivered to some of the art classes at OMS. A representative from APD will also assist in the presentation. Cindy reports that the Patrolmen have been referring cases to Diversion with increased consistency and are better versed in procedures acting on the protocols at initial contact.

Tobacco Peer Leadership Program (OMS) – Diana provided an overview of this program, which is funded by a grant from the George and Elizabeth L. Sanborn Foundation. 20 students from AEC and OMS will be accepted into the program. The students will develop leadership skills, create a social norms campaign, and, prepare a school-wide project for the Great American Smokeout, on November 17, 2011. The curriculum will also cover new products such as Orbs, which resemble Tic Tacs, and deliver 7x more nicotine than 1 cigarette. Christine mentioned that the Board of Health had recently been awarded a grant to strengthen local policies around tobacco use and sales.

Student Social Norms Campaign (AHS) – Colleen and Kathy reported on the fall kickoff of the Social Norms Campaign at AHS. In the spring, students in Mr. Vatan's Computer Aided Drafting and Design (CADD) class developed and submitted a selection of products aimed at promoting positive messages and correcting misperceptions about underage drinking. AHS students and Coalition members voted on most relevant submissions. Some of the submissions have been posted around AHS, with plans to rotate selection in October and November. Members suggested writing an article for the Advocate and acknowledging the AHS student artists. Colleen confirmed she would pen this article.

IV. Looking Ahead: Drug Free Communities (DFC) Grant for Year 4

Review 2011-2012 Action Plan: Colleen reminded the group that this is our second to last year of DFC funding, and while we are eligible to reapply for another 5-year grant, the process will be highly competitive. AYHSC will need to demonstrate that it is a well-organized and sizable coalition, with diverse representation from the community. It will also need to demonstrate that its initiatives are sustainable beyond DFC funding. To this end, we need to grow AYHSC, take advantage of the knowledge, skills and passions of others in the community, and as we move forward, distribute the work of the coalition more evenly.

Colleen informed the group that the full action plan is available for those who wish to review it. She then highlighted a few upcoming projects, and asked members to consider how they, or someone they know, might be able to contribute to one, or more, of the projects. Each of these projects will require considerable planning, and collaboration with others in the community.

Discuss Opportunities for Project Leadership and Support:

Colleen stated that this year, the Coalition is offering three *Guiding Good Choices* workshops (two in the fall and one in the spring). These classes are free to the community and offer tools for strengthening family bonds and communication as a way of reducing risky behaviors such as substance abuse. Now enrolling for the first workshop, which will begin on Wednesday, October 19th and run through November 16th. Workshops will be held in the Senior Center, from 6:15PM-8:15 PM. Coalition members Mindy Davin and Sheryl Cohn will facilitate this workshop.

Lynn informed the group that the Coalition is looking for 3-5 interested group members to participate in a new initiative called *Table Talks*, which was developed by the Maine Office of Substance Abuse. This initiative is an opportunity to bring parents in the community together to provide support, exchange information and access education about underage drinking and how to prevent it. The gatherings will take place in a home or relaxed setting in the community and will target parents of 5th – 8th graders. Table Talks will be an exciting opportunity for Coalition members to volunteer their time in a variety of ways, including researching, organizing, coordinating and creating a "Table Talks" model that suits the Arlington community. The Coalition is looking for interested individuals to facilitate and host the Table Talks. A facilitator training will be offered to interested members. Karen offered her assistance with this model.

Cindy discussed the Coalitions goal of *reducing adult drinking at public youth events*. The Coalition is looking for members with experience and/or interest in the areas of: laws around public drinking, regulations regarding park use, and field permits. Assistance is needed for gathering facts around public alcohol use, and outreach to community members: coaches, parents, residents of abutting parks as well as the Recreation, DPW and Arlington Police Department. Finally, efforts are needed to explore solutions, develop partnerships and promote parent compliance with laws and regulations. Members discussed this ongoing problem, identified opportunities for increasing awareness and promoting community education on the impact these actions have on developing youth. Captain Flynn and John Scheft offered their assistance.

V. Upcoming Events and Volunteer Opportunities

Date	Event	Time	Description
September 17	Arlington Town Day	8:30 AM- 3:00 PM	Set up/break down, AYHSC/Drug Take-Back booth
Oct.19 - Nov.16 (Wednesdays)	GGC Parent Workshops	6:15 PM- 8:15PM	Help with program promotion
October 21	"Out on the Town"	7:00 PM- 10:00 PM	~AYCC Fundraiser
October 29	DEA National Drug Take-Back	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM	~Help with program promotion ~Assist with med collection
November 19	Community Collection Day	9:00 AM- 1:00 PM	~Help with program promotion ~Assist with med & sharps collection

VI. Meeting Adjournment: Next Coalition Meeting: October 20, 2011